# FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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**FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER**

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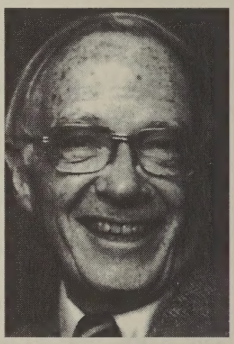
*Cover photograph by Ron Wagner: Morning Meditation at Fellowship in Prayer: Paul Walsh and Ani Trime.*



"My religion," the Dalai Lama has said, "is kindness." Not Buddhism. Kindness. Loving Kindness towards everyone.

Everyone, His Holiness tells us, wants to be happy. Everyone in the whole wide world. Everyone wants to be free from suffering, wants to be at peace: with himself, with her family and neighbors, with all of Creation.

Why is it, then, that our world is so full of violence and war, of fear and hatred, of mean-spiritedness and contempt for those less fortunate than ourselves?

Like you, I try to be kind and peaceful and help others. In my ignorance, however, (I often ignore the basic impulse of my heart to be loving and compassionate), I allow my fear and insecurity to confuse and alienate me from my true self and others.

Sadly, we all to often allow our heads to bully our hearts into denying that we are all interrelated and responsible for each other.

How can we change that? What skillful means can we use to liberate our loving hearts from the captivity of those familiar terrorists: hostility and jealousy, suspicion, indifference to the pain and suffering of others, the desire to be someone special? How can we water the seeds of loving kindness that are planted in the very ground of our being, so that they ripen and bloom, and bring joy to the lives of those around us?

To start with, we might try working with a series of spiritual practices such as these:

- *Put others first.* For one whole day, from the time you get up in the morning till you go to bed at night, put the wishes and needs of others ahead of your own desires. Defer to others, no matter what your ego tells you.
- *Speak only for the comfort of others.* For two whole days, say only comforting and affirming and encouraging words to others. Abstain completely from criticizing, gossiping, complaining, arguing, or bad-mouthing anyone.
- *Give up all expectations and attachments.* For one whole week, try to be absolutely non-judgmental about everything and everybody who comes your way. Have no expectations of liking or dis-

liking. Be grateful to everybody and everything. Don't attach to pleasurable happenings or try to avoid what displeases you. Accept everything and everyone just as they are, without wishing them to be different.

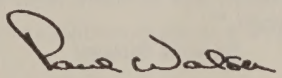
- *Do something kind* for someone, anyone (especially someone you don't know or don't like!), in the morning and again in the afternoon every day for a week. Your action, spontaneously sprung from your loving heart, can be as small and sweet as a smile for a homeless person or a helping hand to someone young or weak or old enough to need your strength. Even better, let your act of loving kindness be anonymous—known only to yourself.

As Shantideva, the eighth-century Buddhist spiritual master wrote:

May no one who encounters me
ever have an insignificant contact.
May the mere fact of our meeting
contribute to the fulfillment of their wishes.

May I be a protector of the helpless,
a guide to those travelling the path,
a boat to those wishing to cross over,
or a bridge or a raft.

May I be a lamp for those in darkness,
a home for the homeless,
and a servant to the world.*



*Paul Walsh*

* Taken from *The Gift of Prayer,* the upcoming (Fall of 1995) Fellowship in Prayer book, to be published by Continuum.

The purpose of the holy life does not consist in acquiring support, honor or fame; nor in gaining virtue, concentration, or the eye of knowledge. But that unshakable deliverance of the heart—that indeed is the object of the holy life: that is its essence, that is its goal.

*From the Pali Canon*

Love is the true means by which the world is enjoyed: our love to others, and others' love to us.

*Thomas Traherne*

O Little Brother Bird, that brimmest with full heart, and having naught, possessest all, surely thou does well to sing! For thou hast life without labor, and beauty without burden, and riches without care. When thou wakest, lo, it is dawn; and when thou comest to sleep it is eve. And when the two wings lie folded about thy heart, lo, there is rest. Therefore sing, Brother, having this great wealth, that when thou singest thou givest thy riches to all.

*Francis of Assisi*

Everything is perishing except for Your face.

*Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi*

I thought that I had arrived at the very throne of God and I said to it, "O throne, they tell us that God rests upon thee." "O, Bayazid," replied the throne, "we are told here that God dwells in a humble heart."

*Bayazid Bistami*

That which you worship is the first thought that comes to your mind when you are suffering anxiety.

*Ibn 'Abbad of Ronda*

When the signs of age begin to mark my body, and still more when they touch my mind; when the illness that is to diminish me or carry me off strikes from without or is born within me; when the painful moment comes in which I suddenly awaken to the fact that I am ill or growing old; in all those dark moments, O God, grant that I may understand that it is You, provided only my faith is strong enough, who are painfully parting the fibers of my being in order to penetrate to the very marrow of my substance and bear me away within Yourself.

*Teilhard de Chardin*

# Discussing Prayer with Brother David Steindl-Rast

There are no words beautiful enough to describe what it is like to spend two hours discussing the life of prayer with Brother David Steindl-Rast, the Benedictine author and lecturer who has followed a monastic calling for some 40 years. I recently interviewed Brother David for Fellowship in Prayer at Big Sur in California in a little hut that felt like a cathedral and overlooked one of the bluest skies and most sparkling oceans I have ever seen. The room was full of the stillness, reverence, graciousness, patience, holiness, that only prayer can create.

With whales playing in the distance, yellow butterflies drifting by the window, and Brother David's big tiger cat purring happily on a shelf behind us, we couldn't help but talk about the sacredness of animals, the spirituality of animals, and Brother David made this wonderful remark:

> I so much like this particular area of spirituality. For many people, animals are angels, messengers from God. Especially for older people who are sick, or people who are shut-ins, their dog or their cat or their bird is an angel that comes to bring God's love. Life gets to be routine, but then this little animal comes out of the bushes and suddenly there is a surprise. We become children again and look in the animal's eyes and touch it.
>
> Animals, like nature, like the whole universe, are filled with God's spirit. When a squirrel comes out of the bushes and eats out of our hands, or a bird comes down on the table, it lifts us up. We open and are joyful and surprised, and that surprise is the only really perfect name of God.

Brother David is wise to see a surprise as an experience of God. Being surprised is the only way we can truly meet God. Our guard is down; we have no expectations; we are for once not trying to control, not looking for anything, not trying to get something. The spirit inside ourselves is free to flow into the spirit outside ourselves, like the air we breathe.

There is always a breakthrough of God's love when we encounter

the spirit in an animal. The slender veil that separates us from God so much of the time opens and slips away, and for a moment we are one with God. The human soul, the animal, the world, the Tao, the Absolute, are all one. God is the Ground of Being, and we are there at the Sacred Ground. This is an experience of transcendence and enlightenment and union, and contains everything that the mystics of all the world's religions are always trying to teach us: that there are great moments which make all our struggles and pain worthwhile; that we should cherish and cultivate these moments when there are no worries or needs or anxieties, and only the Holy Spirit exists.

As I write this introduction to Brother David's interview, a beautiful calico cat, "G.S.," is curled up on my lap: a warm, soft, happy, furry, loving little ball of pulsating life. It was a great surprise—and a true experience of God's love—when she appeared on our lawn one summer day and adopted us. My little girl named her "G.S.," for "Godsend, " but neither my husband, nor I, nor our daughter, realized fully that day what grace and spiritual beauty that little cat would bring to our lives.

I hope that you are experiencing endless meetings with God through the spirit of animals—and I hope you will enjoy our interview with Brother David Steindl-Rast, who understands more than anyone I know the ways of the Holy One.

*Mary Ford-Grabowsky*

# Coming Alive and Becoming Real: An Interview with Brother David Steindl-Rast

*Fellowship in Prayer editor, Mary Ford-Grabowsky, travelled recently to Big Sur in California to interview Brother David Steindl-Rast, the beloved Benedictine monk, internationally acclaimed author and lecturer, and America's leading authority on the life of prayer. Brother David divides his time between a small office at the Esalen Institute, preparing lectures and writing, and New Camaldoli Hermitage, devoting himself to the life of prayer. Particularly well known for his book,* Gratefulness: the Heart of Prayer, *Brother David recently collaborated with Robert Aitken Roshi, the noted Zen teacher and scholar, on a book entitled* The Ground We Share: Everyday Practice, Buddhist and Christian, *an in-depth conversation on the necessity of spiritual practice for leading a rewarding and responsible life.**

*Brother David speaks gently, with eyes as deep as the ocean at Big Sur, and with great humility and concentration, as one will after forty years of prayer. Joy and laughter overtake him frequently, and his face lights up brightly when the conversation turns to animals, children, and the Holy Spirit. You will glimpse the depths of his spirituality and his humanity in the part of the interview which follows.*

**MFG:** I've had the impression from your writings that you feel it isn't necessary to spend years in prayer in order to find the prayerfulness that so many people are seeking today. You seem to be saying that the silence is right here, that we are very close to it, that we can enter into deep prayer at any time.

**BD:** Yes. Every moment. In an office, we might be able to go to a window for a moment to find the prayerfulness. Or on our lunch hour, we could go to some little patch of green grass, and just allow it to speak to us. There is that lovely saying, "I said to the almond tree, speak to me of God, and it blossomed."

Many people now are learning to spend, say, ten minutes, maybe fifteen, in prayer. Some people need longer than that to fill the need in their lives. Many people find it worthwhile to set the alarm clock ten minutes early, and have those ten minutes for listening to music or

*You may order a copy from Liguori Publications by calling the toll-free number: 1.800. 325.9521.

Michelle Boyd

reading some spiritual text, or being in silent prayer. Ten minutes can be a long time and very good for beginning meditation. I often say that less is more. Shorter is often more because you don't get so easily distracted. Make it short and allow yourself to sink into it. The decisive thing is allowing yourself to sink into it. Just stay with this image of sinking into God's loving hands, of letting yourself fall into God's loving hands, of letting yourself be embraced by a loving God. God is there. Our instinctive imagination in the kind of society in which we live is to climb up, not to sink down.

**MFG:** It seems to me that people are afraid of the "down". Many people think of that as depression, which they flee.

**BD:** Yes, and there is, of course, this danger. In our society, there's always a danger of depression. Sometimes it is not a good idea to meditate, if one is inclined to depression. It is not a good idea to expose yourself to that. It might be much more pleasing to God to take a quick walk—and that is also a very good method against depression. The walk might be the prayer. We must remember that everything can become prayer, and that the standard is, "Does it make you more alive?"

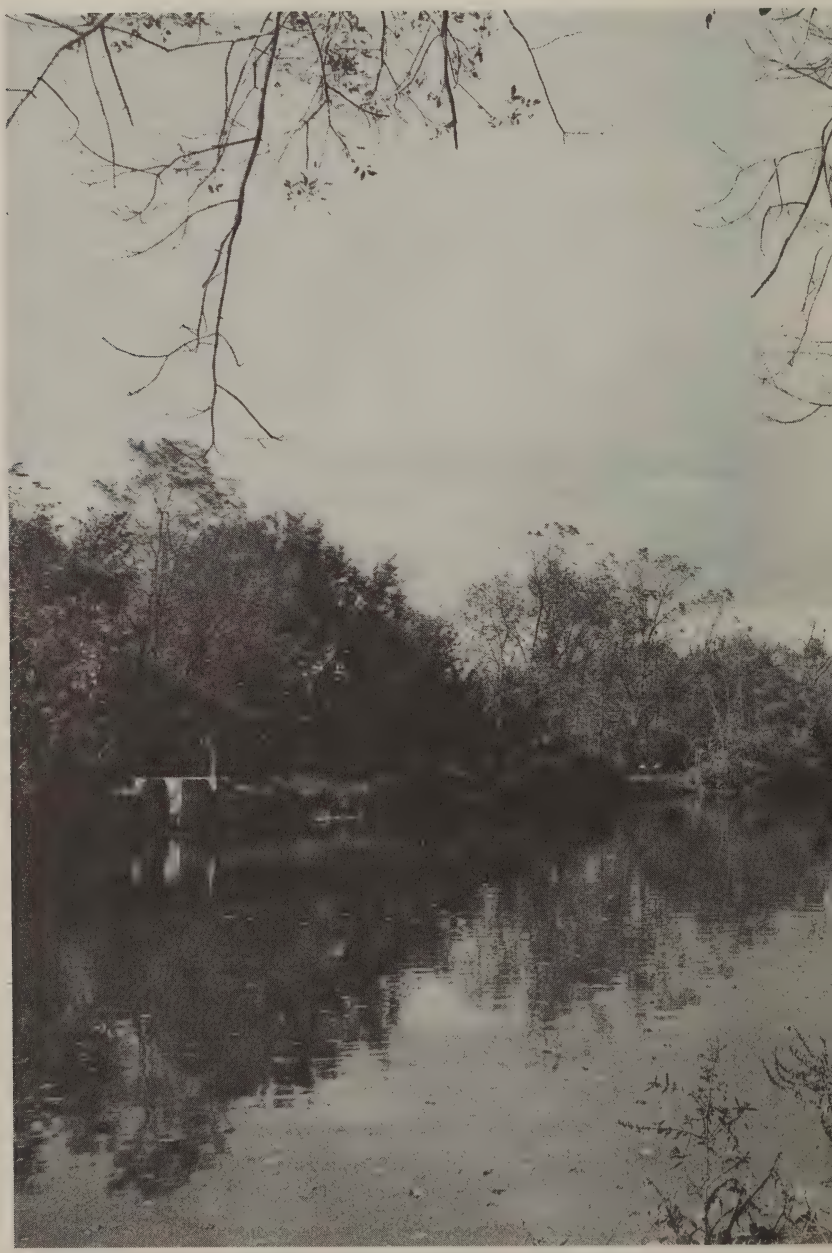
**MFG:** You are saying—and I'm happy you are saying this—that there is no one method of prayer that fits everyone, that there are many different ways to pray.

**BD:** Yes, you can't prescribe something for everybody. Nobody knows as well as you yourself know what makes you really alive. And then you can either do what makes you feel alive or not. You can say, "When I drink that first cup of coffee in the morning, I really come alive." Then you can ask yourself, "What else gives me this feeling?" Maybe you are leaning against the kitchen counter, drinking this first cup of coffee, and a certain attitude comes along, say, an attitude of leaning dreamingly. Maybe this is the right attitude, and when you duplicate that attitude in other situations, those other things make you come alive. Or maybe you have an attitude of wanting to grab, and get something. That is not the right attitude. It is not the clenched fist that grabs that gives aliveness: It is the gesture of open hands with which we receive.

**MFG:** I see one problem in this issue of seeking aliveness. Wouldn't we be apt to run away from necessary pain, or always be escaping from anything that doesn't feel alive?

**BD:** Pain is a sign of aliveness! When we are dead, we don't feel the pain anymore. We speak of deadening the pain. And one of the reasons why we all have an inner reluctance to this coming alive is precisely that when we come alive, we are also more sensitive to pain. We become more vulnerable. And the more alive we are, the more vulnerable we are. That's why we are even afraid of falling in love. It is a great feeling but we expose ourselves to pain. We need to have the courage to come so alive that we will feel pain even more keenly.

And there is pain that we ought to be feeling now at this time in history. We need to be feeling compassion with all the suffering people about whom we know through the media. That can be a keen pain. But the more we expose ourselves, the more we will see that it is worth the pain! As in the children's story, *The Velveteen Rabbit,* where all the toys want to become real. That's their great goal. But they are a little afraid of becoming real, and so they ask an old, experienced hobby horse, "What is it like to become real? Does it hurt?" And an old, wise toy answers, "When you are real, you don't mind the hurt." When you are real, you don't mind the hurt. So, to the extent to which we become alive, we will find that it is very painful but we don't mind.



**MFG:** That's a lovely story. The crucial word is "real." We need to understand what it means to become "real."

**BD:** Yes, right. "Real." I just read recently that dreams are the reality: Nothing else is as real. So the kingdom of God is the reality. God's life pulsating through the whole world, that is the reality. What happens to us in moments of prayer, that is the real, and everything else is less real. We can discover that for ourselves. We know that in our most alive moments we touch upon a reality that is "absolutely real." There can be no question whether an experience was real or just a dream or imagination, because in that moment, we take the very measure of what "real" could possibly be. So we want to become real. That's the spiritual effort. It's one way of saying what it is all about to be on the spiritual path. We become one, we become real.

**MFG:** It's the search for the truth, isn't it.

**BD:** Truth, yes. And when Joseph Campbell says, "Follow your bliss," that is absolutely in there: Truth. We need to become authentic, to become peaceful. Becoming superficial and unauthentic has a kind of thrust to it, and once we get into this wrong lane, we become more and more unauthentic. So once we turn—and conversion is the name of this turning—once we turn and set our hearts in the opposite direction, towards becoming more real, cost what it may, pain or no pain, we are growing. We see how enlivening it is, how joyful, in the deepest sense, even with all the pain.

**MFG:** The world's mystical traditions would see a great deal of purification in this kind of growth.

**BD:** Of course.

**MFG:** In this context, I'd like to know what you think about the Christian mystical idea of "purification, illumination and union." Do you think that description of the spiritual path is still viable for our era?

**BD:** Yes! These steps of purification and illumination and union are a pattern that has been observed by the mystics. It isn't something to "believe" in: We just find it. It is just the way it works. But there are people who came to any such pattern in a rigid way and say, "Well, I have just now finished purification, and I am starting illumination, and I hope that by next spring I will be in union!" It isn't like that. It's not rigid. If it is rightly understood, it can be enormously helpful. In

moments of union—which we all have, if we pay attention to them—there is something beautiful. Like a baby in a cradle. Our whole heart goes out and we have a moment of union with God. These are our "peak moments," those moments when time stands still and we feel at home, we feel a deep sense of belonging. For a moment we are not orphans. We are at home in the universe. We can remember, too, that there are still many moments of darkness. When God's light flashes up in a certain moment, it makes many dark areas visible. So even in our moments of illumination, when we feel a bright light of insight, or a bright warmth of light in our heart, it is important to remember that there is still much that has to be purified.

**MFG:** In essence, you just defined the experience of illumination as a kind of "insight" or "light" that all people can experience, which raises a question for me. Most of the mystics in both the East and the West write about an experience of "light." For instance, Hildegard of Bingen called the light that she saw "the Living Light." Do you think that such intense spiritual experiences are available to everyone, and beneficial for everyone? Or is there just a "spiritual elite" that can benefit from these experiences?

**BD:** Some people have more talent to experience these things bodily and physically, and others have less. The decisive thing is the inner attitude of openness and receptivity, opening the eyes of our hearts, the ears of our hearts. But yes, I believe that we can all have these experiences.

And we can remember to be grateful for the experiences when they come, to not cling to them, not snatch for them. Because again, the inner gesture of prayer is that of the raised hands with open palms.

> We must remember that everything can become prayer, and that the standard is, "Does it make you feel more alive?"

**MFG:** Would you share with our readers a spiritual experience of your own that you cherish?

**BD:** What comes to mind occurred in the early 80's. There was a march from the United Nations, in New York City, a peace march. Close to a million people were participating, and it was a great expe-

rience. On the second day, there were some demonstrations at different embassies, which were very peaceful and very beautiful. I was with a Pax Christi group from Columbia University that was demonstrating at the French Embassy. We knelt there and prayed from eight o'clock in the morning until early afternoon. At twelve o'clock, someone said, "Oh, it's twelve noon, let's pray `the Angelus'," and so we all started praying the Angelus. We were all kneeling in one line and standing opposite us was a long line of New York City police, with their visors down, barring the entrance of the building. It was silent confrontation. Now half of those police are Irish Catholics, and when we started praying the Angelus, they all put up their visors, and prayed the Angelus with us. A bystander said, "I can't tell the police from the demonstrators anymore!" And one of the policemen said, "If I weren't in uniform, I'd be on your side!" And then it was over, and they all put their visors down again.

**MFG:** Thank you. That's a beautiful story, and it gives me hope for the future. The more we pray together, the more we understand each other. Did it have the same impact on you? Are you hopeful about the future—despite the ecological crisis and the general destructiveness in the world?

**BD:** Yes, very hopeful. And it is important to remember that hope is open for surprise! We were speaking before about surprises. Without hope, there is no surprise! We have a right to feel hopeful because statistically speaking, we should already have destroyed ourselves. So there are forces on our side that are statistically relevant. One can see that something is working for us. You can say—from a religious spirit—that it is the angels or it is the power of God or its God's mercy or whatever. It is quite obvious. Yet we must not presume all of this. We have a right to be open and to rely on the healing power of nature only when we cooperate with it. To the extent to which we inform ourselves and cooperate with the healing forces, to that extent we can be hopeful. Just by way of living in the first world, we exploit the third world. Just by eating hamburgers, we are implicated in the depletion of the world. And some people are not fully aware of that.

We must all do something. We cannot just ride along and say that everything will be okay. That's not hope. Hope is facing the fact that we are indeed troubled, while staying open for a surprise.

**MFG:** I find that prayer—more than any other human activity—motivates us to "do something," as you say.

**BD:** Yes. Prayer motivates us to act. Prayer is a force that works in that direction. Just to do our best, to heal the earth without prayer, would be doing only half the job.

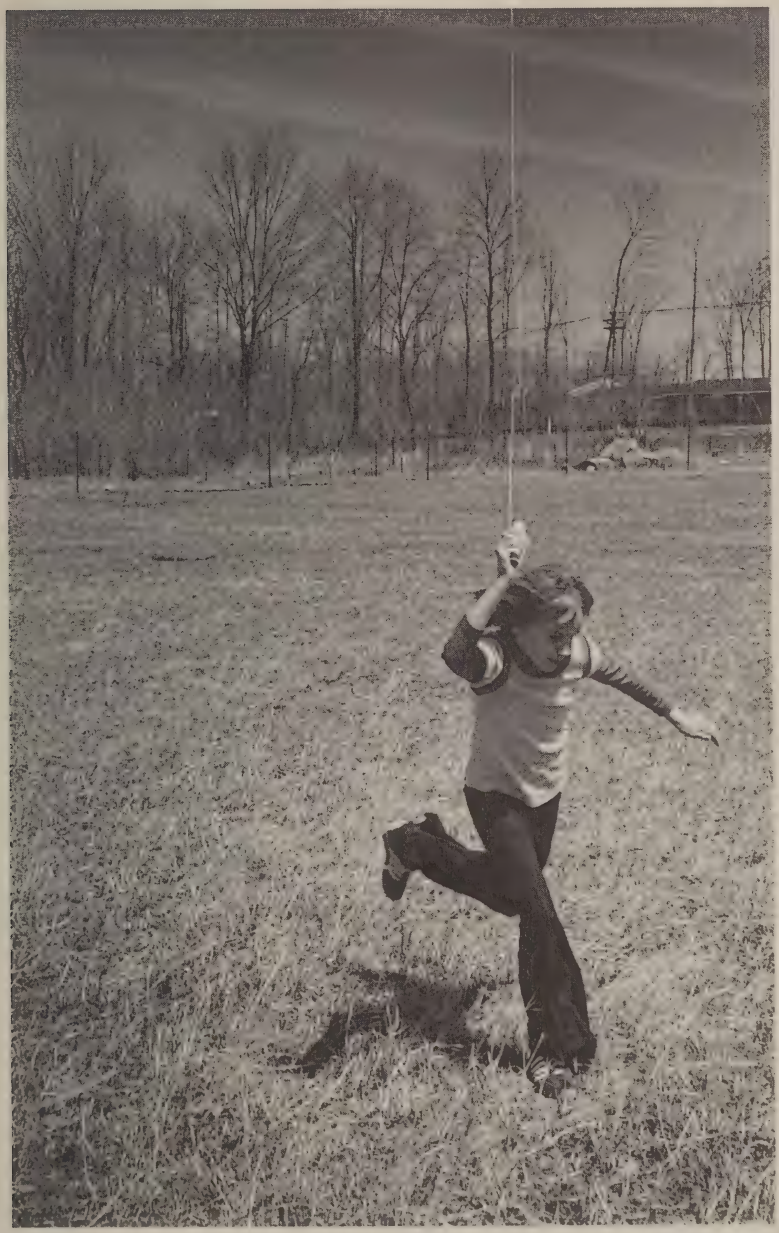
Some people would say that the very effort to heal the earth is prayer. But to make it consciously prayer, to express it in prayer, to say prayers, that is an important part of the healing.

**MFG:** Thank you.

## THICH NHAT HANH

May I be peaceful, happy and light in body and in mind
May I be safe and free from accidents
May I be free from anger, unwholesome states of mind, fear and worries
May I know how to look at myself with the eyes of understanding and love
May I be able to recognize and touch the seeds of joy and happiness in myself
May I learn how to nourish myself with joy each day
May I be able to live fresh, solid and free
May I not fall into the state of indifference
or be caught in the extremes of attachment and aversion
May you be peaceful, happy and light in body and in mind
May you be safe and free from accidents
May you be free from anger, unwholesome states of mind, fear and worries
May you know how to look at yourself with the eyes of understanding and love
May you be able to recognize and touch the seeds of joy and happiness in yourself
May you learn how to nourish yourself with joy each day
May you be able to live fresh, solid and free
May you not fall into the state of indifference
or be caught in the extremes of attachment and aversion
May all beings be peaceful, happy and light in body and in mind
May all beings be safe and free from accidents
May all beings be free from anger, unwholesome states of mind, fear and worries
May all beings know how to look at themselves with the eyes of understanding and love
May all beings be able to recognize and touch the seeds of joy and happiness in themselves
May all beings learn how to nourish themselves with joy each day
May all beings be able to live fresh, solid and free
May all beings not fall into the state of indifference
or be caught in the extremes of attachment and aversion.

*A Vietnamese monk and renowned spiritual teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, Jr. Retreatants come from all over the world to meditate and study with him at Plum Village in France. Among his many books is* Being Peace.



Tom Dunham

## *Made One With Thee*

Save Thee, I see nought in the two worlds, for in truth Thou alone dost exist in this world and in that. From everlasting Thou wast and changeless shalt be: unto eternity is Thy Being and shall be forever. O Thou Who didst make manifest both time and place, Thou hast created both the human soul and the universe wherein we dwell, and Thou dost cause the spheres to revolve and dost make the hearts of thousands to be filled with awe and amazement at Thy manifestation of Thyself.

Now I am made one with Thee and from that Union my heart is consumed with rapture. By union, I have been merged in the Unity, I am become altogether apart from all else. I am Thou and Thou art I—nay, not I, all is altogether Thou. I have passed away, "I" and "Thou" no more exist. We have become one and I have become altogether Thou.

*Farid al-Din `Attar*

## *In Praise of Creation*

Lord, may we love and respect all your creation, all the earth and every grain of sand in it. May we love every leaf, every ray of your light.

May we love the animals: you have given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Let us not trouble them; let us not harass them, let us not deprive them of their happiness, let us not work against your intentions.

For we acknowledge that to withhold any measure of love from anything in your universe is to withhold that same measure from you.

*Fyodor Dostoevsky*

## *Benediction*

Deep peace of the Running Wave to you.
Deep peace of the Flowing Air to you.
Deep peace of the Quiet Earth to you.
Deep peace of the Shining Stars to you.
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

*Celtic oral tradition*

## *All Things Tell of Tiráwa*

In the beginning of all things,
wisdom and knowledge were with the animals,
for Tiráwa, the One Above, did not speak directly to humankind.
Tiráwa sent certain animals to tell men and women
that he showed himself through the beasts,
and from them and from the stars and the sun and the moon,
humankind should learn.
Tiráwa spoke to us through his works,
and the Pawnee understands the heavens, the beasts, and the plants.
For all things tell of Tiráwa.

*Pawnee Oral Tradition*

## *Prayers for a Group*

May this group be a true spiritual home for the seeker,
a friend for the lonely, a guide for the confused.
May those who pray here be strengthened by the Holy Spirit
to serve all who come, and to receive them as Christ himself.
In the silence of this place may all the suffering,
violence and confusion of the world encounter the Power
that will console, renew and uplift the human spirit.
May this silence be a power to open the hearts of men and women
to the vision of God, and so to each other, in love and peace,
justice and human dignity.
May the beauty of the Divine Life fill this space and the hearts of all
who pray here with joyful hope.
May all who come here weighed down by the problems of humanity
leave giving thanks for the wonder of human life.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*Laurence Freeman*

# The World Asks a Question

RUSSELL SMITH

One summer afternoon, a couple of years ago, I was riding my bicycle past the university, finding my eyes drawn inevitably toward young women on the sidewalk. Without warning, a statement popped into my head, "There is no cure." Oddly enough, a big sigh of relief swept over me, and as I pedalled along I kept repeating to myself, "There is no cure, there is no cure." When I got home, I explained those words to myself.

This world does not exist to satisfy my needs. That is not its purpose, and as long as I turn to the world for a cure, for an answer, I will experience disappointment and, worse yet, exploit the object of my affection. This is no big news, of course. Buddha put it succinctly a long time ago. "Desire is suffering."

It seems to me that all my troubles stem from this source. I turn to the streets (to relationships, to food, to work, to books, even to religion), for an answer which is within, intimate, as close as my next breath. Kabir's words come to mind, "I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty."

Today, as I sit on the porch in my overstuffed chair, sipping coffee, watching the sky change, I say to myself again, "There is no cure," no answer out there. Suddenly it occurs to me, if the world is not an answer then perhaps it is a question. And if I can encounter the world as a question, if I stop calling on it long enough to hear it call on me, perhaps I can explore and appreciate the world without exploiting it. I can hear it now, in the roar of my neighbor's lawn mower, in the chirp of a cardinal in our black walnut tree. The world asks one question in a million different ways: "Am I loved?" I will spend my whole life learning how to answer "Yes."

*Russell Smith writes that he is "a janitor by trade, a poet by calling." He publishes in small literary journals, and lives in Ohio with his wife; Mary Fowler, their dog, Otis, and their cat Sophia.*

Robert F. Campbell

Arizona: Chiricahua National Monument; Massai Point Trail

# Rock Ritual XX: Lamentation of the Rocks

ROBERT O'ROURKE

Long ago nature's music played along
the slopes of our sacred Chuska Mountains;
their bright melodies lingered deep in the valleys.
My people, the Dineh,* took solace in
wind whispers,
coyote songs,
the silence of rocks and
high-soaring eagles.
Today I return to this place where my ancestors
gathered medicine herbs.
I stop to listen for the old melodies
running softly through the trees,
for the beating heart of Mother Earth,
the rhythm of sparkling waters.
The sonorous sounds are no more!
what remains are
lamentations of blasted boulders,
clanking of chain saws,
crashing trees,
rocks crumbling into dust.
My spirit yearns for the long-ago, lost harmonies —
the musing of insects,
rustle of leaves,
the voice of the hawk.
Stooping down, I choose one tormented rock;
holding it gently toward the sky;
together we pray to the FATHER-OF-ALL-THINGS
for the return of earth song,

*The Navajos, who were given their name by the Spanish conquistadors, refer to themselves as Dineh, "the people"—*Ed.*

*Robert O'Rourke is a Colorado writer, poet and folk artist, who sculpts* santos, *statues of saints revered in the Northwest.*

the murmur of grass,
butterfly wings and
the gentle silence of rocks
at peace.

Lisa Smith

JIM DREAVER

*Once in awhile the holy ground of being comes into sight in its full glory. Can this occasional experience satisfy humanity's ageless quest for enlightenment?*

Enlightenment has often been spoken of as the "ultimate cure" for human suffering. Yet what does it mean to be enlightened? D.T. Suzuki, the scholar who did so much to introduce Zen to the West, defined it this way: "Enlightenment is the thunder-and-lightning discovery that the universe and oneself are not remote and apart, but an intimate, palpitating Whole."

Most of us have had such enlightenment experiences at one time or another, glimpses of the innate beauty and perfection of life, and our oneness with it. For many of us, the awakening to Reality—as brief as it may be—changes the course of our lives, giving us a new sense of direction, of meaning, of purpose.

I remember the first time it happened to me, more than a dozen years ago now. I awoke early one summer's morning and every thought in my mind spontaneously dropped away, and I found myself in the most remarkable state of clarity, of peace and stillness, I had ever known. It was as if all the veils of illusion had been stripped away from my mind, and I was seeing Life for the first time. And what I saw was that everything was good, perfect, just as it was, and that I was loved by God, by the universe.

It was a profoundly healing experience for me. I had never felt so clear, so free. For those few minutes there wasn't a trace of tension or doubt within me. There wasn't even a "me" to have any doubts. As a result of that awakening, my spiritual journey took on a new direction. Now I knew what I was looking for in my meditation and my inner work. I was seeking *that* experience again, the experience of wholeness, of harmony, of unity.

It may be that all of us are driven, deep down, by the quest for wholeness, for the realization and expression of our true Self. It is the healing that our heart yearns for—the healing of our soul, our spirit, that in us which wants to be free to soar, to create, to play and to love.

But it's one thing to have a glimpse of Reality, of who and what we

Jim Dreaver is a chiropractor and freelance writer residing in Sebastopol, CA.

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really are; it's quite another to learn to embody that insight in a way that makes a difference in our lives.

When we first awaken, the difference between those moments of enlightened awareness and our ordinary, everyday consciousness is so striking that we often find ourselves wanting to withdraw from the world. Having discovered the source of inner peace, we may feel a sense of futility, of "Why bother?" in regard to our worldly responsibilities and commitments.

Something in us knows that no amount of external achievement or accomplishment is ever going to bring us the kind of rich inner fulfillment that comes when we just get quiet and still inside, and tune in to our true nature, into the spiritual immensity that underlies everything.

But as Karlfried Graf Durckheim writes in *Zen And Us,* "A day inevitably comes when we realize that the peace we seem to have found outside life's contradictions is actually the peace of indolence. Repressing our true nature was one way of failing to become a complete human being—and we fail again now if we try to pretend that we have no ego, that we are not in the world ... We are forced again and again to face up to the ego and our human destiny."

> Enlightenment is the thunder-and-lightning discovery that the universe and oneself are not remote and apart, but an ultimate, palpitating whole.

"It is true," he goes on to say, "that the objective world has become 'transparent' once and for all, allowing Being to show through—but the real task now is to bring Being into everything we see and do, to make existence fully real in terms of Being. It is this new sense of responsibility toward a new world, and not merely the breaking of the old one's spell, that really makes the Zen experience satori."

*Satori* is the flash of enlightenment, the intuitive realization that our true nature *is* Wholeness—a clear, empty joy as the Tibetan Buddhists describe it—and that to be happy, to be at peace, we need only abide in our true nature. Yet, as Durckheim points out, our ordinary humanity demands that we be present not only with the unitive state, the oneness that is at the heart of everything, but also with the multiplicity of everyday life, the diversity of everyday experience. It means seeing the Absolute in the relative, the Divine in the world.

How then do we live in the world, dealing with our various responsibilities and obligations, and yet deepen our relationship with spirit, our true nature? It helps if we can accept that enlightenment is a process, a journey, rather than some transcendent place we "arrive" at. As Suzuki says, "Even after enlightenment, practice must continue so as to deepen and expand the experience."

By practice he was referring not only to meditation, the importance of taking time each day to re-connect with the Source, to attune to our spiritual, or Buddha nature, but also the quality of awareness and presence with which we go about our daily life—whether we are washing the dishes, handling a family crisis, or working at our job.

For me, this has always been the attraction of Zen—its eminent practicality. In Zen, an enlightenment that is not lived in the world, in the hurly-burly of the marketplace, in the melting—and sometimes boiling!—pot of human relationships, is no enlightenment at all.

Of course it helps a great deal if we are allied with others who are on the same path, whose lives too are consciously centered around this deep yearning for wholeness and inner freedom. Without a supportive community—what is known in yoga as *satsang*, or the "company

Tom Dunham

of truth"—it is difficult to stay focussed and on purpose. I think this is one of the reasons why workshops are so popular in our culture. The nurturing and healing environment of the workshop fills some of our *satsang* needs without our needing to join a cult or organization.

For many of us, the awakening to Reality—as brief as it may be—changes the course of our lives, giving us a new sense of direction, of meaning, of purpose.

Is enlightenment the ultimate cure for our suffering, then? I think Ram Dass responded to this question beautifully when he said once that after all his years on the path, after all his meditating, all his psychotherapy, all the mind-expanding experiences he'd had, he hadn't actually gotten rid of any of his neuroses.

He just took them less seriously now! He was freer of them, his general state of being was calmer, there was more harmony in his life. When he got off balance, he came back to center much more quickly. The kind of stuff that used to be such a source of suffering for him—the "drama" that we all get mired down in—just wasn't such a big deal anymore. At some level inside of himself he knew that he was bigger than all of it.

I don't know about you, but that sounds pretty good to me!

# The Chieti Monstrance

EUSTACE D'SOUZA

*The human spirit triumphs in a prisoner-of-war camp in World War II.*

Harry Hargreaves was an officer in the Indian Army in World War II. He was captured by Rommel's Afrika Korps at the Siege of Tobruk in 1942, and found himself in a prisoner of war camp in Chieti in Southern Italy. There were three thousand officers in the camp, many of them Catholic. These Catholic officers built a chapel in the camp and named it after St. Therese. The chapel was the brain child of Fr. Stanley Brach, an American chaplain who had been captured in Tunisia.

After the chapel became functional, Fr. Brach felt the need for a monstrance* so he could provide Benediction for the prisoners. Harry Hargreaves, who was good with his hands, volunteered to make a monstrance out of wood. He made the central part, where the host is placed, from the circular shell of a food-tin. The glazing, through which the host was to be visible, he made out of talc from an officer's map-case. The glue he used was of local make, not of high quality.

Over a period of weeks Harry set about cutting, whittling, scraping and smoothing with an illegal pen-knife smuggled into the camp, with old razor-blades, and with bits of broken glass. All this work had to be done in the utmost secrecy, but Harry got the job done. He polished the wooden frame with brown shoe-polish and presented the monstrance to Fr. Brach, who began to use it regularly for Benediction in the chapel.

When Italy got out of the war Harry was transferred to a camp in Germany, Fr. Brach to a camp in Poland. He took the monstrance with him and used it for Benediction in the new camp. When the Russians over-ran the camp, Fr. Brach fled, taking the monstrance with him, and made it back to the U.S.

**In Roman Catholic tradition, a monstrance is a receptacle in which the consecrated host is exposed for adoration*—Ed.

*Major-General Eustace D'Souza lives in Bombay, where he is very active in the Roman Catholic Church. He was in charge of organizing the logistics of Pope John Paul II's visit to India some years ago. He has retired from the Army and devotes much of his time to playing a leading role in the World Wild-Life Organization.*

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Holding a monstrance: Testitlán, Oaxaca, Mexico

He was reassigned to Guam as chaplain to the troops there. They also received Benediction from the Chieti monstrance. After the war the priest was made a pastor of a parish in McAllen, Texas, near the Mexican border. He used the monstrance there, too.

Many years later Fr. Brach visited England and took the monstrance with him when he visited Harry, for it needed repairing. Harry repaired it with modern bonding, "turned" the center on his lathe, and had it gold-plated. He then gave the wood-work a glossy finish.

It was Fr. Brach's wish that the Chieti monstrance be presented to the Benedictine Abbey at Prinknash in England, where Harry's son was a monk, so that it could be properly preserved. This was done. Eventually Fr. Brach died in Texas, but as long as he was alive he kept in touch with Harry and so heard what finally became of his beloved, well-traveled monstrance.

Harry's son, Mark, was elected abbot of Prinknash Abbey (where the great apostle to India, Bede Griffiths, was a monk). Through his efforts a Benedictine Abbey was founded in Ghana, West Africa. It was called "Christo Beecasee." At the time of the consecration of the new

Abbey's chapel, Dom Mark arranged for the Chieti monstrance to be presented to the new Abbey as a symbol of the lasting spiritual bond between the Abbey in England and the Abbey in Ghana. Today the monstrance is regularly used for Benediction, exposed on a stump of mahogany carved in the shape of a chalice.

Thus, the improvised Chieti monstrance, which helped to bring spiritual sustenance to prisoners of war in Italy and Poland, to troops on Guam, to parishioners in Texas, to monks in England, now does the same for Ghanian Catholics in a small village in West Africa. Will that be its final resting-place?

# Three Principles for Prayer

LORETTE PIPER RSCJ

*Here is an earthy spirituality for people who want to be real.*

Three principles for prayer have emerged like pillars in my life during many years of struggle. I offer them as catalysts for your own principles.

(1) SHOW UP. As the saying goes, "90 of life is showing up." If I didn't show up for prayer regularly, I'm pretty sure I would be an atheist. Prayer gets me in contact, makes the connection, hooks up the conscious aspect of the relationship. Showing up can't be based on feelings. Just as I can't expect to live unless I breathe, so I can't expect to believe in God unless I pray. Showing up, no matter what, keeps things clear: God is the center and I am not; God is the moment-by-moment Creator, and I am the moment-by-moment creature. Then I can say to myself, "Relax. You're only a creature and a deeply flawed one at that."

If I don't show up, I am a much more dangerous person than if I do, using people and circumstances to fulfill my needs and acting from the frayed edges of the self, rather than from a sense of inner direction. If I don't show up, I might go through the day on cruise control or automatic pilot, just doing one thing after the other. If I don't show up, I am easily ambushed, captured, kidnapped away from awareness of what's really important. If I don't show up, my perspective shrinks, and I forget Isaiah's spacious, gracious suggestion, "Push back the pegs of your tent." I lose the desire to cast my nets deeper into the ordinary and feel cramped and constricted.

Each of us needs to work out a realistic plan for showing up. No one will present the time and place to us with a smile. We have to claim it. A daily hour? Morning Psalms, evening review of the day with an un-interrupted stretch of time on Saturday or Sunday? Do we have an undisturbed spot at home or somewhere else? Can we make better use of what has to happen anyway? I know several prayerful dog-walkers and many contemplative commuters. How about anointing people

*A writer, retreat director, and prison chaplain, Sr. Lorette Piper, rscj, is a regular contributor to* Fellowship in Prtayer.

Tom Dunham

with the name of Jesus while waiting on line in the supermarket, as well as checking out the hilarious headlines of the *National Enquirer* or the *Star*? Or a walking rosary for the agonies and ecstasies of that day's news report? Or the "laying on of hands" for companions in the doctor's waiting room?

(2) PAY ATTENTION. Pay attention to the world outside and to the world inside. By doing that, are we not also paying attention to God, the tenderly-working depth of all creatures? A friend refers to the divine revelation in limited people, ambiguous events, and necessary circumstances as "God's humility." Paying attention can help us recognize God's action across the broad spectrum of our lives—in crisis and routine, in food, fights, fun and forgiveness. As Paul reminds us, all is grace; there's no split between faith and life. When I asked a middle-aged friend with four young children how she found her daily time for prayer, she replied with radiant gratitude in her voice, "At night, when my children are sleeping, I listen to them breathing."

I find it helpful at the end of the day to look back and ask, "How were You present and acting and speaking today? How was I present or absent to You? Paying attention to our inner patterns of light and darkness, elation and heaviness, attraction and resistance, is a way of trying to listen to God who speaks within hearts, minds, and bodies, as well as in scripture and sacrament, the global community and the signs of our times. A soul-friend can help us sort things out, protect us from our delusions, and uncover our heart's deepest desires.

By making us available to God's love, prayer can enable us to embrace the world God so loves, according to our particular vocation. Two women Doctors of the Church, Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila, both long revered as mystics and contemplatives, never separated the personal from the political. Catherine cried out, "Be up and doing! The world is lost through silence!" And Teresa wrote, "Those who penetrate to the furthermost dwelling in the castle of the soul find themselves back on the street again." Dorothy Day, the 20th century foundress of the Catholic Worker movement, a peacemaker, journalist, lover of the poor (and of Trollope, Dostoyevsky, and Beethoven), exhorts us matter-of-factly: "All I ask is that you find a useful task to do, carry it out responsibly, and manage somehow not to infuriate those around you."

For some of us, meditation on our own struggles or disabilities might provide guidance as to the nature of our service. Finding God

in our own dark places and receiving forgiveness, healing or release make it possible for us to discover God in the dark places of this beloved world.

> Those who penetrate to the furthermost dwelling in the castle of the soul find themselves back on the street again.

(3) "PRAY AS YOU CAN, NOT AS YOU CAN'T." At times we simply have to let the Spirit pray within us and stop worrying about our prayer life. Rather than worrying about doing something correctly, we can just do whatever helps us to become available to God's eager love.

Many years ago I made my summer retreat in Jersey City where sirens, noise and violence are staples. On Sunday afternoon, seeking peace and quiet, I took refuge in a beautiful church, assuming it would remain empty and still. Settling down in a back pew, I closed my contemplative eyes, and a line from Hopkins floated up into my consciousness: "Elected Silence, sing to me, and beat upon my whorled ear." A gentle rain had just begun. Precisely at that moment, in burst several homeless persons with shopping carts and plastic bags; they sat and chatted quietly in the back of the church. Suddenly, the main door burst open and a large, ebullient Spanish-speaking family entered and established themselves in the sanctuary—complete with tambourines, maracas and guitars—and began rehearsing the music for their latest baby's baptism. Then other people drifted in, young and old, Asians and African-Americans. Soon, Altar Guild ladies were praying the rosary aloud. Teenagers were lighting candles. Old men were making the Stations of the Cross. Middle-aged women were praying in the Lady Chapel. I looked up at the mosaic of the Apostles, I looked around at each saint's statue, and I looked at the powerful and tender image of Jesus crucified behind the altar. I started to laugh aloud, or perhaps I just joined in God's laughter. The prayer that came to me was something like this: "Take your place in the family. Relax. Everyone is trying to do the same thing by whatever means: to get in touch with the Mystery, to make contact with Love and with each other, to get through the night, to be at home. There's plenty of room in this house for every prayer and every person."

# Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

*Do you have a question of the heart or spirit that needs attention? Angela, our canine sage-in-residence, would love to help. Please write to her in care of FiP, and she will answer you in our next issue.*

Dear Angela,

Could you share with us your thoughts concerning resentment and holding grudges? Many thanks.

Sincerely,
*Resentful*

Dear Resentful,

Thank you very much for your question. I'm sure most of us on the planet have felt resentful from time to time. Although holding a grudge may be a part of life, it need not be a way of life. If you are among those who do feel resentful but would like to feel less so more often, I hope I can be of some assistance to you and offer you some hope. As you may have guessed, I have not lived a grudge-free life myself, but have made significant gains in this area in the last few years. What I've discovered is that when it comes to grudges, a certain amount of good old-fashioned short-term memory loss plus a little forgiveness can go a long way toward shortening how long we feel resentful. Any number of transgressions can cause me to feel resentful. Being moved from any location I've invested energy in nestling into — such as the living room couch, or underneath it — or being removed from any sleeping area. Having my blankets cleaned, sprayed, moved, or mucked with will set me off. I feel resentful when I'm left by myself in the backyard or when I'm forced to cuddle against my will. I feel resentful when I'm ignored, or soaped, clipped, dipped, or de-flead. I am no slouch in how I express my resentment, either. I can administer the cold shoulder or dish out the silent treatment right up there with the best. I am not above taking my own little slighted self-righteous self down for a resentful and solitary snooze in the basement. I sleep with my grudge until the moment when I hear one of my beloveds in the kitchen. Then I high-tail it upstairs in a friendly, forgiving manner to see if anything will be falling off the counter besides

broccoli. Dinner prep is a time of eagerness, expectation, hope and playfulness. There is no room or time for grudges, and so by dinnertime I've let my grudges go.

When you are feeling resentful toward something or someone, it means you are feeling hurt or slighted or threatened in some way. One means of moving your grudge along its way and out of your way is to acknowledge your hurt and let the anger and hurt out in ways that are effective but safe for yourself and others. One of my personal favorite ways of safely expressing my hurt is by barking at the mailman from behind the closed front door. Some good old-fashioned howling and twirling in place eases my hurt feelings while my blanket dries and allows my resentful feeling to pass on by.

While you hold your grudge, there is less energy and attention available for discovering the whereabouts of chicken, squirrels, and shade trees.

Holding on to our grudges can serve us in some important ways. Our grudges can help us feel strong and sure, solid and right. Our grudge reminds us that we've been wronged and we have every right to feel angry about it, and we're within our rights to stay that way forever. That grudge keeps us feeling right, and that makes us feel pretty good because feeling right is a special solid feeling to feel. This feeling of being right may be intoxicating and habit-forming. If you can't feel cozy, at least feeling right is something; and besides, feeling right is fun, and holding a grudge is fun—unless it isn't.

One thing I've learned from my own life: keeping your grudges in place requires a lot of sleep. Grudge-holding can take its toll. Holding grudges is a demanding occupation; it can become a major life project. Grudges can easily become a way of life. While you hold your grudge, there is less energy and attention available for discovering the whereabouts of chicken, squirrels, and shade trees. Although holding grudges can make you feel right, it is not a pillow filled with cedar-chip shavings, nor does resentment foster any lap-sitting opportunities. Because feeling right can feel so good, letting go of our resentments becomes a tricky business. It is just hard to see that life without carrying around our resentments is easier and more pleasant because sharing our resentments can also feel like fun. I love sticking my nose up and leaving my family for the basement. I just don't love

it forever or through dinner. On the basis of my own experience, I can say that harboring resentments does make one miss things like the weather and squirrels.

For those of you tired from holding on to your grudges who would like to let go and move on, I share with you the *Angela Method for Letting Go of Grudges.* I have used all the steps myself and have found it so effective that although I actually weigh fourteen pounds, I feel as though I weigh only eleven pounds since I began following the Angela Method myself.

## *Angela Method for Letting Go of Grudges*

1. Acknowledge that you've been hurt and go to your sacred space and sleep on it, snorkel into the folds of your blanket, howl, yowl, and bark.

2. Feel your grudge, feel right about it. Feel good about feeling right about your grudge.

3. Give yourself time to ponder the possibility of letting your grudge go. Practice letting go of your grudge for a few minutes at a time, like when you chase a squirrel.

4. Pray for more willingness to let go. It's a big step— being willing, big enough to pray about it. Continue to hold on to your grudge if you want, and pray for more willingness.

5. When you're ready, bury that grudge deep in the backyard, so deep that you won't be digging it up anytime soon.

6. Never sleep on a grudge overnight. Let go of your grudges by dinnertime.

7. When it comes to grudges, learn to cultivate some short-term memory loss.

8. Try helping out another soul with their feelings of resentment, or try giving to another that which you would like for yourself.

Although I'm hard-pressed to explain how this last piece of magic actually works to benefit all, I can only say that it works and does benefit all. I may be sitting at home alone needing a chest-rub and feeling resentful that not one beloved is available. Then my best buddy

comes by. She, too, seems to be in need of care and comfort. I invite her to sit beside me on my blanket. I place one paw on her arm. She is comforted. My resentful feelings dissipate. I get a chest-rub. Need I say more?

To all those harboring resentments, I hope I have been of some help and hope. I wish you lighter days.

Faithfully,
*Angela*

*MOVING?*

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In the deep shadows of the rainy July,
with secret steps, thou walkest, silent
as night, eluding all watchers.

Today the morning has closed its
eyes, heedless of the insistent calls of
the loud east wind, and a thick veil has
been drawn over the ever-wakeful blue sky.

The woodlands have hushed their
songs, and doors are all shut at every
house. Thou art the solitary wayfarer
in this deserted street. Oh my only
friend, my best beloved, the gates are
open in my house—do not pass by like a dream.

*Rabindranath Tagore*

## *Seeing Her in Yugoslavia*

We had no choice.
When she arrived
we leaped, zig zagged
across the meadow.
Wildflowers
opened their mouths
and gasped.

Swift
as a bolt of lightning,
traveling from earth
to heaven's door,
we stood at her side.
When she smiled,
fear melted.
Replaced, written
in Hebrew,
by her hand:
Thy Will Be Done.

*Richard Ballon*

*The author of* Gitanjali *and many other classics in the history of Western poetry, Rabindranath Tagore was born in India in 1861.*

*Richard Ballon is a widely published poet and playwright. Among the many publications in which his work has appeared are* The Saint Anthony Messenger, Brownbag Press, Onionhead, Parnassus, *and* Lilliput Review.

# The Power of the Mantra

GULSHAN KHAKEE

*Today more and more people in the West are adopting the primarily Eastern practice of reciting and chanting "mantras," very brief prayers. Here an Indian Hindu explores the power of mantras to still the mind, to heal, and to bring us closer to God.*

*****

*Muktanandaya Gurave Shishya Samsara Harine Bhakta Karye Kadehaya Namaste Chidsadatmane Sadjurunath Maharaj ki jaya*

What you have just read is a mantra. A mantra is a sound, a word or a group of words denoting the inner Self, the divine inner consciousness, the innermost essence of all beings. In Hinduism, the mantra is the symbol of the inner Self in terms of sound.

It is the sound vibration of the inner Self. Therefore it has the power to put us in touch with our inner Self. For instance, if I were to ask you for a banana, you would give me a banana. You would not give me an apple or a piece of cake. Similarly, the mantra leads you to the inner Self and nowhere else.

There was a great saint in India not too long ago, Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa. One day, he was giving a talk, saying how the mantra had great power to lead one to God. There happened to be in the audience a man who considered himself modern and rather clever. So he got up and told Ramakrishna that what he was saying was rubbish. Ramakrishna kept silent. After a while he suddenly looked at the man and said, "Hey, you fool!" The man became furious at that so Ramakrishna said, "Well, brother, what has happened to you? Why are you so upset?" The man answered, "You just called me a stupid fool, and now you are asking why I am so angry?" Ramakrishna replied, "I did not want to call you a fool. I was only demonstrating to you the power of words. If a simple abusive word has the power to upset you so much, can you believe that the name of God, the mantra, has the power to evoke God, and to put us in touch with the ultimate reality?" So this is the power of the mantra.

*Gulshan Janabai Khakee has a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Harvard University. She spent many years studying meditation with the well known Indian teacher, Swami Muktananda.*

There are two types of mantras; *jadd* mantras, and *chaitanya* mantras. The *chaitanya* mantras are said to be alive, conscious mantras. The chaitanya mantra is the one imparted by the Guru* to the seeker. The Guru has used this mantra to attain self-realization, so his *Shakti* (or energy), pervades it. Such a mantra has then the power to make the seeker who receives it and uses it also self-realized.

A young Dutch man came to see my Guru, Swami Muktananda, some time ago. After being in the ashram** a couple of days, he went up to Muktananda and asked for a mantra. Muktananda handed him a mantra card on which was written the mantra, *Om namah Shivaya*, and an explanation as to how to repeat it. When the man saw this mantra he felt disappointed, because he had been interested in meditation before he came to Muktananda, had looked through a mantra book and happened to pick this very mantra. Nothing had happened. He did not want an ineffective mantra. But Muktananda told him to go to the *Dhyan Mandir* (meditation room), and to meditate, which he did. The young man related afterwards that as soon as he sat down and began to repeat the mantra, his body became totally still and he went into deep meditation.

This is the difference between a *jadd* and a *chaitanya* mantra. The latter has the power of the Guru behind it, and can bring you instantly into the state of meditation.

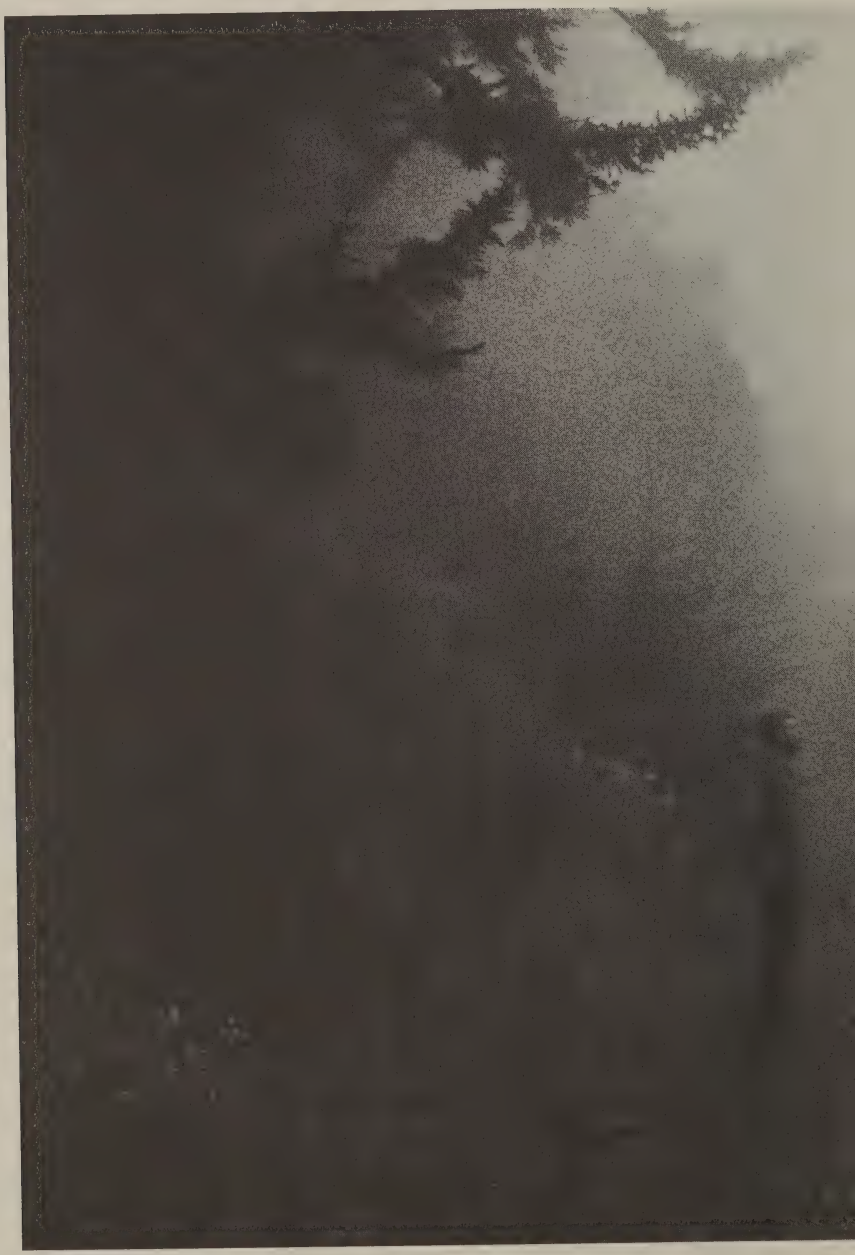
Repeat a mantra with faith, with love, with devotion, with reverence. The mantra will surely take you to your inner Self.

In Siddha Yoga we use the mantra *Om namah Shivaya* for meditation, regulating it with the in-breath and the out-breath. It is Swami Muktananda's initiation mantra. We also use the mantra aloud for chanting with the harmonium, drums, and other musical instruments. Chanting is a practice of joy, of tremendous sweetness. Chanting opens the heart chakra,*** and makes the sweetness of love flow within it. Chanting has a purifying effect by altering the sound vibrations within us as well as all around us.

*In Hinduism, the Guru is the spiritual teacher—*Ed.*

**The ashram is a place where people come together for religious instruction and practice. Many people spend months or years in an ashram deepening their spiritual lives—*Ed.*

*** Hindus believe there are seven *chakras,* or centers of energy, in the human body—*Ed.*



John M Morgan

In Muktananda's ashram in Ganeshpuri, India, there was a special room in which Muktananda had done a lot of mantra *japa* (repetition). The room was charged with the vibrations of the mantra. Once a scientist from Bombay happened to be visiting the ashram. He was rather skeptical, and went up to Muktananda and said that he did not believe in mantra and sound vibrations. Muktananda told him to sit in that room for just half an hour, which he did. After half an hour, the scientist came running to Muktananda and said, "What is the matter with me? I hear the walls, the ceiling, the carpets, everything in that room repeating *Om namah Shivaya.*"

The mantra also has great power to heal, to heal us internally, and to heal others who come in contact with us. I have a friend who is married to an Indian and lives in New Delhi. I visited them when their daughter was about 11 weeks old. The afternoon that I arrived at their house, they had just returned from seeing a specialist, because the baby's eyes were not focusing. (Usually babies start focusing at the age of 5 or 6 weeks.) They were distraught at the idea that the child might be blind. That evening, when they were going to visit a temple with their elder boy, I offered to babysit for the little girl. After they left, I put the baby near me and proceeded to chant the mantra, *Om namah Shivaya,* continuing for about two hours. The next day, the baby began to focus, following colors, sounds, and movement with her eyes. When she had her next checkup with the specialist, who had been worried that the child might be blind, he was amazed. He could not understand how this could have happened. But I knew. It was the healing power of the mantra.

The mantra also brings great calm. A woman told me that when she was to undergo surgery, she asked the surgeon if a tape of the mantra, *Om namah Shivaya,* could be played during her surgery. The surgeon agreed, and the effect on the staff was so calming that hospital administrators ordered copies of the tape for use in the hospital.

Repeat a mantra with faith, with love, with devotion, with reverence. The mantra will surely take you to your inner Self. It will reveal God to you. It will fill you with bliss. For God dwells within you.

Muktananda used to say that his main message to the world was *Apako dhyavo, apako vando, apako pujo; apaka rama apame hi hae,* which means "Meditate on your inner Self. Honor and worship your inner Self. God dwells within you as you."

THE ENLIGHTENED MIND. *An Anthology of Sacred Prose edited by Stephen Mitchell, Harper Collins, New York, 1993, 223 pages, paperback, $12.*

A random sampling of some of the authors and sources in this splendid anthology will give you an idea of the treasures in store for you: The Upanishads. The Bible. The Buddha. Jesus. Plato. Chuang-tsu. Muhammad. Padmasambhava. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. Dogen. Rumi. Meister Eckhart. Dame Julian of Norwich. Montaigne. Spinoza. William Blake. Novalis. Ralph Waldo Emerson. Thoreau. Rilke. Einstein. Kafka. Shunryu Suzuki. Simone Weil.

Simple, luminous words from the human heart fill every page. Having just written the President's Message for this issue, these words of Jesus have a particular resonance for me:

> Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven: for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain to the just and to the unjust.
>
> Don't judge, and you will not be judged; don't condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you: they will pour into your lap good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing. For the measure by which you give is the measure by which you will receive. *PW*

SACRED LITERATURE OF THE WORLD: *Inspirational Passages Selected and Read by Eknath Easwaran, Nilgiri Press, Box 256, Tomales, California 94971, 1995, two cassettes, $16.95; tel: 1 800 475 2369.*

There is no end to the beauty that pours forth from the Blue Mountain Meditation Center in California, where Sri Eknath Easwaran continues to weave the golden threads of his ministry into a fabric as wide as the world. Now Blue Mountain has released a magnificent audiotape of Easwaran reading some of the most beautiful passages in the spiritual literature of the world. There are prayers and poems and prose selections going back as far as the banks of the Ganges in the third millennium B.C.E. The *Bhagavad Gita,* the *Upanishads,* the Shema, Saint Paul, Kabir, Teresa of Avila, Gandhi, and many other sources are represented, and the depths of Easwaran's great soul brings each text to its most full expression of beauty and holiness. As one listens to the

sound of this exquisite voice, one has a sense of huge ocean waves rolling slowly, quietly, softly, timelessly, onto a distant shore, and one is there on that sacred shore, contemplating God.

My heart overflows with gratitude to Eknath Easwaran for his self-giving life and work on our planet for over eighty years. I believe that all that he is and has done comes through his loving voice on these tapes, and I hope you will cherish them as much as I do. (You may order them by calling 1 800 475 2369.) *MFG*

The suggested donation for a year of *Fellowship in Prayer* is $16.00. Many readers, however, send more than that amount as a way of becoming a "Spiritual Friend" to those unable to contribute (especially men and women in hospitals, nursing and old age homes, and religious institutions).

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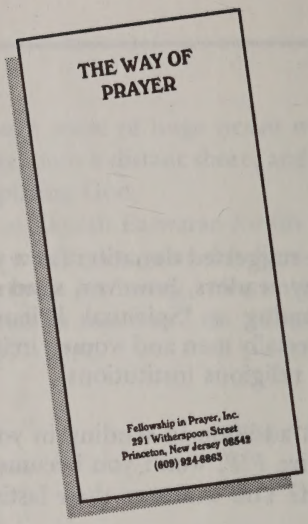


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